

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-03 INR-05 INRE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 L-01 H-01
PRS-01 TRSE-00 NEA-07 DHA-02 IO-06 USIE-00 /058 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5124
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 4752

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MASS, US, ET, SO
SUBJECT: PMAC CHAIRMAN PROTESTS US ARMS ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA

SUMMARY: PMAC CHARIMAN MENGISTU CALLED ME IN AUGUST 4 TO
ADD HIS DISPLEASURE TO THAT ALREADY EXPRESSED BY EPMG OVER
US DECISION ON ARMS TO SOMALIA. USING Milder TONES THAN
DURING OUR LAST MEETING, HE AGAIN WENT OVER PAST HISTORY
OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE SAID US HAD MADE MISTAKES OF
NOT TAKING FOREIGN THREATS AGAINST ETHIOPIA'S SECURITY
SERIOUSLY, HOLDING UP ARMS DELIVERIES, MISUNDERSTANDING AND
PAINTING FALSE PICTURE OF ETHIOPIA'S REVOLUTION, AND NOW
PROVIDING MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT TO COUNTRY COMMITTING
AGGRESSION AGAINST ETHIOPIA. NOT BEING ABLE TO RELY ON
US FOR ARMS ASSISTANCE, MENGISTU CLAIMED HE WAS CON-
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STRAINED TO SEEK ELSEWHERE, BUT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT
ETHIOPIA WAS ANYBODY'S PUPPET. HE ASKED US TO HAVE
ANOTHER LOOK AT HORN OF AFRICA TO SEE WHERE ITS IN-
TERESTS TRULY LIE. AFTER HEARING MY SIDE OF STORY, IN-
CLUDING FULL STATEMENT OF US POSITION ON SOMALI ARMS
DECISION, HE INDICATED INTENTION TO NAME AMBASSADOR TO
WASHINGTON IN NEAR FUTURE, AND ASKED ME TO CONVEY TO

WASHINGTON HIS INTENTION TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. I WAS CALLED TO ALMOST TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH PMAC CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM LATE AFTERNOON AUGUST 4 ON 45 MINUTES NOTICE. HIS LENGTHY MONOLOGUE, WHICH TOOK UP ALL BUT APPROX. 15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING, COVERED MUCH OF SAME GROUND AS OUR PREVIOUS MEETING IN EARLY JUNE, BEGINNING WITH HISTORICAL COURSE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS FROM ETHIOPIAN PERSPECTIVE AND ENDING WITH ETHIOPIAN DISAPPOINTMENT WITH US DECISION RE ARMS FOR SOMALIA WHICH WAS APPARENTLY PURPOSE OF SUMMONS. MENGISTU WAS QUIET, SOFTSPOKEN AND GENERALLY RELAXED THROUGHOUT. ALSO PRESENT WERE MAJOR BERHANE BAYEH OF PMAC, BERHANU DINKA AND BERHANE DERESSE, RESPECTIVELY DIRECTORS OF AFRICAN AND AMERICAN AFFAIRS, MOFA, (BERHANU DINKA WAS REPRESENTING FONMIN) PLUS POLCOUNS.

2. MENGISTU STARTED FROM US RELATIONSHIP WITH PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, A RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS FIRM, STRONG, WITH CLOSE COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE FIELDS. HE PERSONALLY, AS SOLDIER, HAD EXPERIENCED THAT COOPERATION AND REMEMBERED TIMES WHEN BLOOD OF BOTH COUNTRIES WAS BEING SHED FOR SAME CAUSE. WHILE EMPHASIZING SEVERAL TIMES THAT IT WAS NOT HIS INTENTION TO CRITICIZE US GOVERNMENT, HE WANTED TO
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EXPLAIN EPMG STANDPOINT ON HOW EVENTS HAD DEVELOPED TO PRESENT PREVAILING CONDITIONS, TO WHICH IN HIS VIEW SEVERAL IMPORTANT US MISTAKES HAD CONTRIBUTED.

3. ONE SUCH MISTAKE WAS US FAILURE TO TAKE COGNIZANCE OF SERIOUSNESS OF THREAT TO ETHIOPIAN SECURITY. HE REMEMBERED DURING EMPEROR'S TIME WHEN SUDAN GOVT USED SOCIALIST ARMS FROM USSR AND CHINA TO EQUIP AND SUPPORT SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS IN NORTH. ETHIOPIA HAD INFORMED US REGARDING THESE FACTS. AT SAME TIME SOMALIA WAS AMASSING ARMS FROM USSR FAR BEYOND THOSE JUSTIFIED BY HER NEEDS OR ECONOMIC CAPABILITIES. USGOVT HAD BEEN REPEATEDLY INFORMED. FINALLY, WHEN SOMALIA HAD 300 TANKS, SITUATION WAS SO THREATENING THAT ETHIOPIA SENT DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON TO SEEK HELP, BUT CAME BACK EMPTY HANDED.

4. MENGISTU WENT ON TO DESCRIBE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS LEADING TO OUTBREAK OF REVOLUTION, ESPECIALLY EXPLOITATION, MALTREATMENT AND DROUGHT. THOUGH MANY OF HIS AMERICAN SOLDIER COMRADES AT THAT TIME FELT AS BITTERLY AS HE DID ABOUT INJUSTICES, US

GOVT APPEARED TO SHOW LACK OF CONCERN OVER TENSIONS BUILDING UP. DESCRIBING MOTIVATIONS FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS IMPLEMENTED BY EPMG, MENGISTU STRESSED THAT AVENUES CHOSEN AND IDEOLOGIES ESPOUSED WERE NOT MATTER OF FASHION, BUT DONE WITH CONVICTION THAT THIS WAS PROPER PATH FOR ETHIOPIAN CONDITIONS. HENCE, REVOLUTION NOT OBJECT OF MANIPULATION BY ANY FOREIGN FORCE. ETHIOPIA IS MASTER OF ITS OWN DESTINY, IS NO ONE'S PUPPET, STANDS FIRMLY WITH OAU, UN, NONALIGNED NATIONS. IT SEEKS PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR CONTINENT AND REGION, NO INTERFERENCE IN AFFAIRS OF NEIGHBORS, WITH WHOM IT WISHES TO LIVE IN COOPERATION, EVEN TO MERGE INTO CONFEDERATION.

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O R 050928Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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5. MENGISTU TALKED OF ETHIOPIAN RESTRAINT AFTER REVOLUTION. NO PRECIPITOUS ACTIONS AGAINST US, AS IN SUDAN OR EGYPT, NO HASTY PHASE-OUT OF KAGNEW, NO MIS-TREATMENT OF NAMRU OR USIS, WITH SMOOTH PHASE-OUT AT END "OVER LONG PERIOD OF TIME." INDEED, ONE OF FIRST ACTS OF NEW EPMG WAS TO TURN TO US GOVT FOR ADDITIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE, AN INDICATION THAT ETHIOPIA WAS INDEPENDENT AND READY TO STAND ON OWN FEET.

6. IN THAT CONNECTION, ANOTHER US MISTAKE INVOLVED DELAYS ON ARMS DELIVERIES. EVEN AFTER IT BECAME CLEAR THAT GRANT ASSISTANCE IN MAGNITUDE DESIRED WAS NOT POSSIBLE, EPMG DECIDED TO SHIFT TO MILITARY SALES SINCE AFTER SO MANY YEARS ARMY HAD GOTTEN ACCUSTOMED TO US ARMS. WHAT IT ENCOUNTERED WAS DELAY, SOME ILL
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WILL, PIPELINE DIFFICULTIES, PRICE INCREASES, PENALTIES FOR DELAY IN TRANSFERRING PAYMENTS, TO EXTENT THAT MONEY ALLOCATED FOR PURCHASES WAS DISSIPATED OR USED UP FOR OTHER THINGS. AIRCRAFT, TANKS, ARMORED CARS, AND BOATS ONLY PARTIALLY DELIVERED AND INCOMPLETELY EQUIPPED CREATED SHORTCOMINGS WHICH, COUPLED WITH MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, PUT ETHIOPIA IN DIFFICULT SITUATION IN WHICH IT NOW FINDS ITSELF.

7. AT SAME TIME, MENGISTU SAID, REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATIONS HAD BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD IN US AND PORTRAYED IN UNFAVORABLE CONTEXT TO OUTSIDE WORLD BY AMERICAN PRESS, CAUSING DAMAGE TO ETHIOPIA'S IMAGE. TWO CONCRETE EXAMPLES WERE SPENCER AND LEVINE. US HAD ALSO PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY FEUDALISTS WHO HAD FLED TO SUDAN IN ORDER TO RETURN TO MAKE WAR AGAINST INNOCENT PEASANTS. SOME OF THOSE INFILTRATORS HAVE SAID AMERICANS HAVE BEEN SUPPLYING THEM AND SOME AMERICAN ARMS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED, CAUSING FURY AND RESENTMENT AGAINST US. WHILE EPMG DID NOT PLAY UP SUCH MATTERS OR EXPOSE THEM TO PEOPLE, IT WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT US OFFICIALS HAD EMBARKED ON ANTI-ETHIOPIAN ACTIONS. MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAD ISSUED STATEMENTS THAT SINCE HUMAN RIGHTS NOT RESPECTED IN ETHIOPIA, US SHOULD SUSPEND ARMS SUPPLY. US, SO LONG SILENT ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UNDER EMPEROR, THEN USED HUMAN RIGHTS AS REASON FOR SUSPENDING MAP AT VERY TIME WHEN EPMG MOBILIZING EFFORTS TO PROVIDE JUST SOCIAL ORDER. HE RECOGNIZED US PREROGATIVE TO ACT IN ITS OWN INTERESTS AS IT SAW THEM, BUT THESE ACTIONS WERE RESULT OF CLEAR MISINTERPRETATION OF REVOLUTION, WHICH HAD SADDENED ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AND CAUSED DISSATISFACTION.

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8. MENGISTU SAID EPMG SERVANT OF PEOPLE AND RESPON-

SIVE TO ITS WILL. THUS, WHEN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT DEVELOPED OUT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO GOVTS COULD NO LONGER RELY ON US SUPPLIER, EPMG WAS CONSTRAINED TO TELL MAAG TO LEAVE. AT SAME TIME, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS NOT AFFECTED, EMBASSY OPERATIONS NOT TAMPERED WITH. STILL, WHEN NATIONAL LEADER IN POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL INTEGRITY FINDS THAT PREVIOUS SOURCE OF ARMS ASSISTANCE NOT RELIABLE, HE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO LOOK ELSEWHERE IN WORLD. THIS ACT DOES NOT NECESSARILY, HOWEVER, DELIMIT STATE'S ALIGNMENT OR COMMITMENT.

9. ACCORDING TO MENGISTU, US ARMS DECISION ON SOMALIA WAS LATEST AND MOST SERIOUS MISTAKE. ETHIOPIA, WITH NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS, SEEKS ONLY TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, INDEPENDENCE, PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. ITS EXPANSIONIST NEIGHBOR WAS WAGING OPEN AGGRESSION AGAINST ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AND WAS ALREADY ARMED OUT OF PROPORTION. ETHIOPIA WAS "DISAPPOINTED AND SURPRISED THAT USG HAD DECIDED TO STAND BY THE AGGRESSOR WITH ARMS AND MORAL SUPPORT, GIVING THE AGGRESSOR THE UPPER HAND." FOR US TO PROVIDE SOMALIA WITH MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT AT TIME OF SUCH DANGER TIPS BALANCE IN FAVOR OF SOMALIA IN INTERNATIONAL DISPUTE AND CAUSES DISMAY AMONG ALL ETHIOPIAN FRIENDS OF US. MENGISTU, THOUGH NOT STRATEGIST OR POLITICIAN NOR QUALIFIED TO JUDGE GREAT NATION LIKE US, NEVERTHELESS FELT THAT ABOVE VIEWS WOULD BE VERIFIED BY HISTORY.

10. SUMMARIZING, MENGISTU SAID THAT CREATION OF SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA, UNITED, STRONG, AND NONALIGNED, SEEKING PEACE, JUSTICE, AND EQUALITY, WAS NOT CONTRARY TO INTERESTS OF PEOPLE OF AMERICA. BY SATISFYING NEEDS OF SOMALIA, US GOVT HAD EMBARKED ON UNCALCULATED
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COURSE. UNLESS SERIOUS SECOND LOOK TAKEN AT BOTH SIDES, OUTCOME COULD TURN OUT CONTRARY TO US WISHES. SOMALI ACTIONS HAVE ONLY ONE GOAL OF TERRITORIAL ANNEXATION AND HAVE ALREADY PARTLY ATTAINED THAT OBJECTIVE. ANY ASSISTANCE FROM ABROAD TO HELP SOMALIA ACHIEVE ITS GOAL IS MISDIRECTED AND DOES NOT SERVE WELL-BEING OF US.

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

RO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5126

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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11. MY REPLY STRESSED VALUE OF BILATERAL DIALOGUE SUCH AS PRESENT CONVERSATION, US RELIABILITY IN PAST MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP, NO US INTERFERENCE IN ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND SYMPATHY FOR MANY OF CHANGES IMPLEMENTED SINCE REVOLUTION, OUR CONTINUED READINESS TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AS EXEMPLIFIED BY RECENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES ON TWO NEW AID PROJECTS, AND DESIRE TO MAINTAIN BEST RELATIONS WE CAN. I SAID WE HAVE GIVEN NO SUPPORT TO REACTIONARIES IN ANOTHER COUNTRY OR TO GROUPS IN ETHIOPIA ITSELF AND HAD NO INTENTION OF DOING SO. I EMPHASIZED THAT WE HAD HONORED ALL OUR COMMITMENTS RE MILITARY ASSISTANCE AFTER REVOLUTION BEGAN UNTIL THE PROBLEMS OF THIS YEAR AND SAID THAT AT NO TIME HAD EVER DELIBERATELY ACTED TO SLOW DOWN
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SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP. SUCH DELAYS AS MAY HAVE OCCURRED WERE TECHNICAL IN NATURE AND FULLY KNOWN TO ETHIOPIANS. I DISCLAIMED ANY US GOVT INFLUENCE OVER PRESS AND MENTIONED PRESIDENT'S PUBLICLY STATED WISH TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA (WIRELESS FILE NO. 114, JUNE 13, 1977). UPON QUESTIONING MENGISTU, I

FOUND HE KNEW OF NO NEW STATEMENTS BY CONGRESSMEN OR OFFICIALS CRITICAL OF ETHIOPIA SINCE OUR LAST MEETING. I WENT OVER WITH HIM EXACTLY WHAT US HAD SAID WITH RESPECT TO AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON ARMS TO SOMALIA, AND PROMISED TO CONVEY CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS FAITHFULLY TO WASHINGTON.

12. AFTER PROMPTING FROM MOFA AFRICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR BERHANU DINKA, MENGISTU EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PRESIDENT'S INDICATION OF DESIRE TO CONDUCT RELATIONS OF TWO COUNTRIES "ON BASIS OF EQUALITY AND MUTUAL BENEFIT" (SIC) AND TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. OWING TO "INCONVENIENCES" AND DESIRE TO IDENTIFY BEST MAN FOR JOB, THERE WAS NO ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, BUT EPMG INTENDED TO APPOINT ONE SOON. HE CLOSED BY SAYING THAT HE KNEW OF GOOD INTENTIONS OF PRESIDENT AND RECIPROCATED THEM.

13. COMMENTS FOLLOW SEPTTEL.
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TAGS: PBOR, MASS, US, ET, SO
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